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STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay: revised draft resolution

Safety and security of humanitarian personnel

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations,

Deeply concerned by the growing number of complex humanitarian emergencies, in particular armed conflicts and post-conflict situations, in the last few years, which have dramatically increased the loss of human lives, suffering of victims, flows of refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as material destruction, which disrupt the development efforts of countries affected, particularly those of developing countries,

Conscious of the need for the international community to assist and protect the affected civilian population, including refugees and internally displaced persons, in complex humanitarian emergencies, in particular armed conflicts and post-conflict situations,

Conscious also of the great importance of humanitarian and other recovery and rehabilitation assistance in post-conflict situations, the voluntary return and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons, the return to

civilian life of former combatants and the re-establishment of respect for human rights, the need to ensure a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and the promotion of economic and social development,

Taking note of the statement by the President of the Security Council of 19 June 1997,[1] and the views expressed during the open debate at the 3778th meeting of the Security Council on 21 May 1997, on protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations,

Noting the role that a permanent international criminal court could play in bringing to justice those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law, and commending in this respect resolution 51/207 of 17 December 1996 on the establishment of a permanent international criminal court,

Aware that humanitarian operations are generally implemented through close cooperation among Governments and the United Nations, its agencies, other international organizations and Governments and non-governmental organizations,

Commending the courage of those who take part in humanitarian operations, often at great personal risk,

Deploring the rising toll of casualties among humanitarian personnel in complex humanitarian emergencies, in particular armed conflicts and post-conflict situations, as well as the physical violence and harassment to which those participating in humanitarian operations are too frequently exposed,

1. Strongly stresses the urgent need to ensure respect for and promotion of principles and norms of international humanitarian law, including those related to the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, both international and local;

2. Strongly condemns any act or failure to act which obstructs or prevents humanitarian personnel from discharging their humanitarian functions, or which entails their being subjected to threats, the use of force or physical attack frequently resulting in injury or death;

3. Calls upon all Governments and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies, in particular armed conflicts and post-conflict situations, in countries where humanitarian personnel are operating, in conformity with the relevant provisions of international law and national laws, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations, and to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel in order to allow them to perform efficiently their task of assisting the affected civilian population, including refugees and internally displaced persons;

4. Calls upon all Governments and parties in countries where humanitarian personnel are operating to take all possible measures to ensure that the lives and well-being of humanitarian personnel are respected and protected;

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[1] S/PRST/1997/34.

5. Reaffirms the necessity for all humanitarian personnel to respect the national laws of the countries in which they are operating;

6. Urges all States to ensure that any threat or act of violence committed against humanitarian personnel on their territory is fully investigated and to take all appropriate measures, in accordance with international law and national legislation, to ensure that the perpetrators of such acts are prosecuted;

7. Welcomes the opportunity to discuss the respect for and security of humanitarian personnel at the First Periodical Meeting on International Humanitarian Law, to be held at Geneva in January 1998, and invites all States parties to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 to take an active part in that meeting;

8. Encourages all States to become parties to and to fully respect the provisions of the relevant international instruments, including the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel of 9 December 1994,[2]

9. Requests the Secretary-General to present a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on the safety and security situation of all humanitarian personnel and measures to be taken to improve it, taking into account the views of Governments, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, other relevant humanitarian actors, as well as the United Nations Security Coordinator.

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[2] General Assembly resolution 49/59, annex.